

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

PEOPLE, PARTNERS, PROGRESS PUTTING TOGETHER A STRONGER COMMUNITY

“You can’t measure in dollars and cents the value of people getting out to help,” said Bloomington Park Maintenance Manager Paul Edwardson.

TAKE OWNERSHIP OF OUR PARKS

More than 200 volunteers hit the trails to help rid three sites along the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge of buckthorn last fall. The **City of Bloomington**, the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, **Friends of the Minnesota Valley** and the **Department of Natural Resources** hosted the 2005 Buckthorn Across Borders event. At Parker’s Picnic Area near Park Avenue and Columbus Road, about 35 volunteers tackled the invasive plant. Fifteen, one-ton truckloads of buckthorn were hauled from the site.

GO THE EXTRA MILE



Twenty-one former and current members of the **Bloomington SWAT Team** joined a coalition of nearly 90 officers from **Minneapolis, St. Paul** and **Ramsey County** in response to the request for assistance from **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** in hurricane-devastated New Orleans. For two weeks, the team worked 12-hour days, patrolling for looters, helping residents look for loved ones and serving as a backup for the **New Orleans Police**. The City will be completely reimbursed by FEMA for costs incurred in New Orleans.

“We went to New Orleans in the spirit of cooperation and felt honored to be part of such a monumental event,” Bloomington Police Chief John Laux said. “In the future, we may need to ask for assistance from our federal, state and local partners.”

Last year marked the opening of the Lyle Berg Bridge over I-35W – the key link for American Boulevard that not only provides an alternative to I-494, but also creates renewal opportunities along its route. A **federal grant** funded 80 percent of the \$12.5 million bridge. The **City of Bloomington** and the **Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)** also supported the project.

Construction on stage one of the I-494 Third Lane project from Highway 5 to France Avenue was difficult, but MnDOT and their contractor finished

last year ahead of schedule. Two interchanges, seven bridges and three lanes in each direction were added. Also completed were the intersection-to-interchange upgrades on TH169 at Pioneer Trail and Bloomington Ferry Road that eliminated stoplights and bridges. Bloomington Public Works Director Charlie Honchell said these improvements pave the way for safer, less congested roads. “An even more important benefit to the citizens, employees and visitors in Bloomington is the simpler, faster and more convenient ability to move in and across our community,” Honchell said.



“By partnering with other agencies such as MnDOT, we are able to bring these improvements to construction and completion much faster than would otherwise be possible.”

ENSURE A HEALTHY AND VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Public Health adds quality and longevity to our lives by working with other professionals and parents who care about the health of youth and with community clinics to ensure vaccine-preventable diseases are kept under control. Public Health delivers service to those who need it most by working with senior centers and residences to help seniors manage chronic health conditions and with day care centers to make sure they’re providing a safe and healthy environment for our youngest residents. Joining forces with block club captains, Public Health also teaches emergency preparedness to help neighborhoods better prepare in the event of an emergency.

“It’s all about partnerships,” according to Public Health Administrator Karen Zeleznak. “The more partners, the more we can do for our community.”



“Normandale Community College has a reputation for access and outstanding educational programs,” President Kathi Hiyane-Brown said. “Our priority is to engage the community to create opportunities for all.”

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Normandale Community College thrives with the support from businesses and individuals. **Bloomington Rotary** sponsored the College Success Center for academic tutoring and testing, helping students to achieve their academic goals. **Many individuals** who are committed to education offer their time and resources to the college. Normandale also gives back to the community. Through a **Minnesota job skills partnership grant**, specialists are trained to help unemployed and underemployed individuals in the community gain employment. Also, **students** receive academic credit for community service in a service-learning program that includes volunteering for homeless shelters, community centers and other organizations.



treat stormwater runoff from the I-494 corridor before it flows into Nine Mile Creek.

On a parcel purchased by the **Minnesota Department of Transportation** and the **City of Bloomington** at the southeast corner of Normandale Boulevard and 84th Street, a pond was constructed to

PROTECT WATER BODIES

Ponds treat and control stormwater runoff by providing temporary storage for excess water. As sediment and other pollutants settle in the pond, cleaner water enters downstream water bodies.